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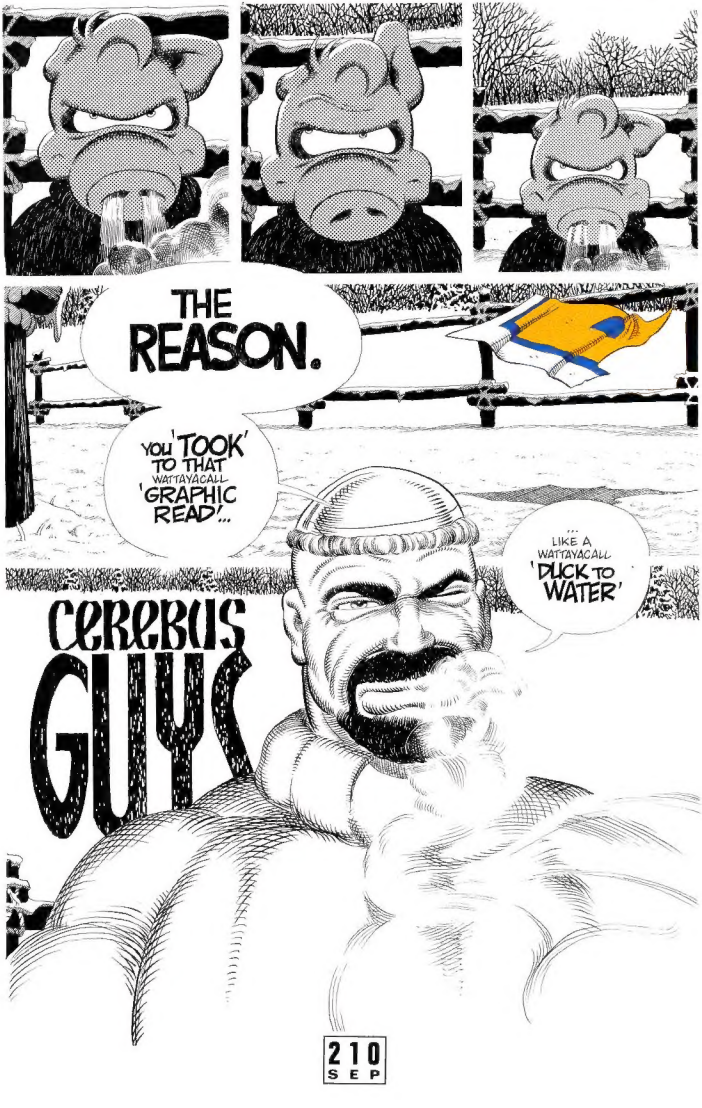

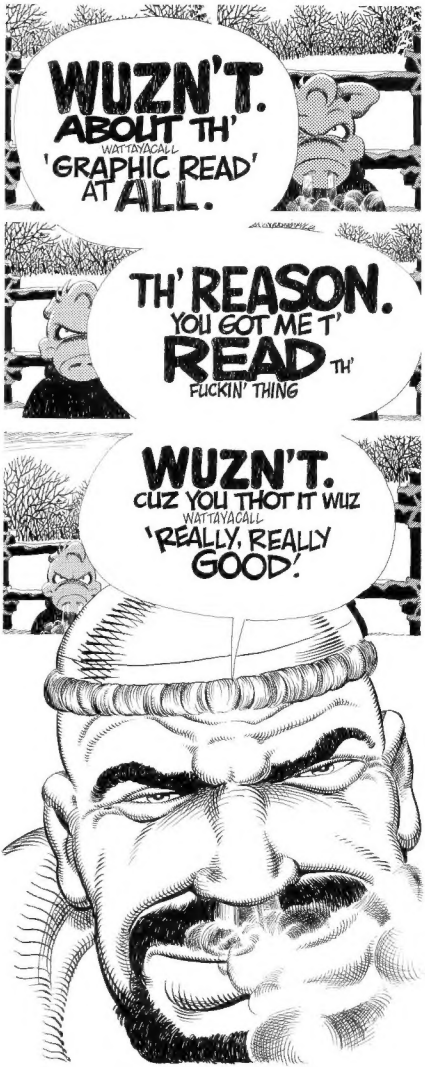
WUZN'T. ABOUT TH' WATTAYACALL 'GRAPHIC READ' AT ALL.
TH' REASON. YOU GOT ME T' READ TH' FUCKIN' THING
WUZN'T. CUZ YOU THOT IT WUZ WATTAYACALL 'REALLY, REALLY GOOD'.

CEREBUS

NO. 210 SEPTEMBER 1996

DAVE SIM
Creator, Writer, Characters/ pencil & ink, lettering

GERHARD
Background Artist/pencil & ink, cover colourist, mechanical tones

CAROL WEST
Administrative Assistant

DIANA SCHUTZ
Proofreading

GUYS
a novel
•
(Cerebus 201 to Cerebus 219)

MONTHLY

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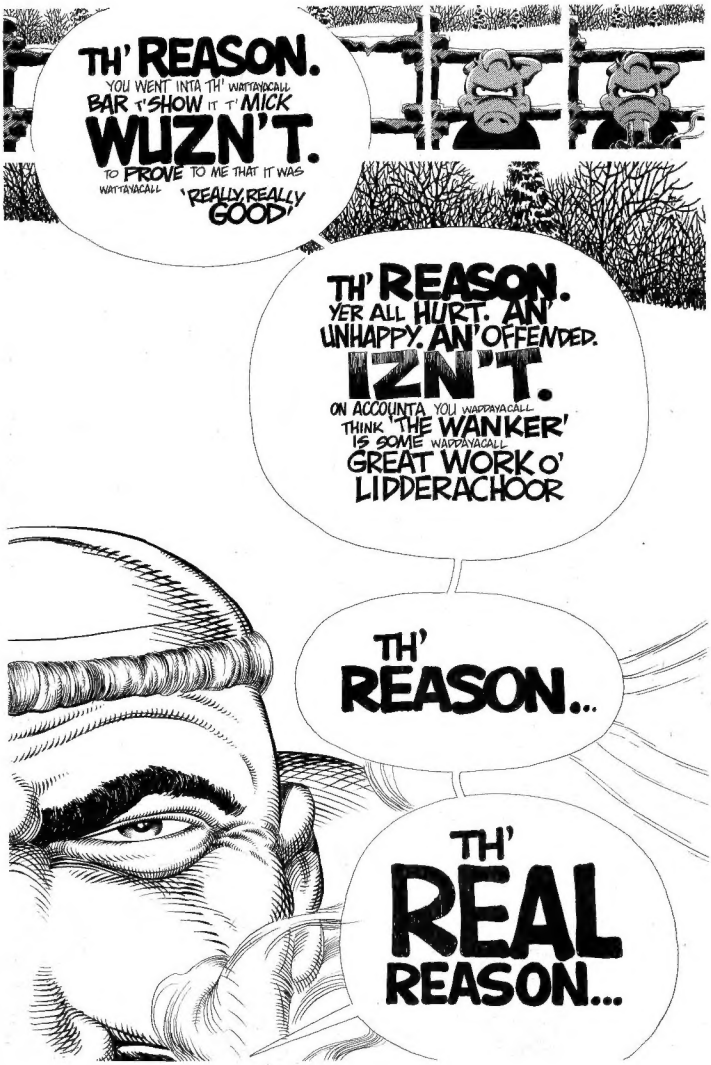
TH' REASON.
YOU WENT INTA TH' WATTAYACALL BAR T'SHOW IT T' MICK
WUZN'T.
TO PROVE TO ME THAT IT WAS WATTAYACALL 'REALLY REALLY GOOD'
TH' REASON.
YER ALL HURT. AN' UNHAPPY. AN' OFFENDED.
IZN'T.
ON ACCOUNTA YOU WADDAYACALL THINK 'THE WANKER' IS SOME WADDAYACALL GREAT WORK O' LIDDERACHOOR
TH' REASON...
TH' REAL REASON...

...
I'S I'M WAT'DYACALL WINNING.
I WENT FOUR-FER-FIVE...
YOU ARE NOW ONE-FER-TWO.
AN' YOU'LL FUCKING DO ANYTHING ...
TO AVOID TAKING THOSE LAST THREE WAT'DYACALL SHOTS...
'CAUSE IF YOU MISS EVEN ONE OF 'EM...
I.
WIN.
NOW.
I'M GOING TO WAT'DYACALL PICK UP MY RACKET.
AN' I'M GONNA GET IN NET.

YOU.
ARE GOING TO WATTAYACALL TAKE THREE SHOTS.
YOU MAY DISTRACT ME BY: CALLING ME-- WATTAYACALL -- NAMES.
MAKING THAT FART NOISE WITH YER NOSTRILS.
HOOFIN' ME IN TH' NUTS (IF YOU C'N WATTAYACALL REACH 'EM).
OR ANY O' TH' REST O' THAT WATTAYACALL GUY SHIT.
BUT JUST FER A WATTAYACALL CHANGE OF PACE...
YOU MAY NOT:
SAY A BALL IS WATTAYACALL 'IN' WHEN IT'S WATTAYACALL 'OUT.'
'OUT' WHEN IT'S WATTAYACALL 'IN'.
SAY IT WATTAYACALL BOUNCED WHEN IT WATTAYACALL DIDN'T
OR SAY IT WATTAYACALL DIDN'T BOUNCE WHEN IT WATTAYACALL DID.
OR ANY O' THE REST O' YER
'CHICK' SHIT.
ONE-PER-TWO.
IT'S STILL YOUR WATTAYACALL

TIME IN!
TUNG
BIP
BIP
TWO-FER-THREE.
TUNG
TUNG
SOMETHING.... WRONG?
DID CEREBUS BREAK A ...
JUST....
WHATSACALL....
SHOOT.

TUNG
TUNG
OKEY DOKEY.
TUNG
TUNG
TUNG
TUNG
TUNG
TUNG
TUNG
SHIT!

THWOK
AAG!
GAL
TUNG
CHK

THAT COUNTS! THAT COUNTS! CEREBUS GOT IT BEFORE...
YES, 'DEAR'. BEFORE IT HIT THE GROUND 'DEAR'. I KNOW 'DEAR'. I SAW IT, 'DEAR'.
OBSIGGEN SUNUVA!?
BYOOTYFUL FUCKING SHOT (BY THIS WAY)
TUNG
TUNG
THREE-FER-FOUR

TUNG TUNG
TUNG TUNG
ANKS.
TUNG TUNG
TUNG TUNG
TUNG
TUNG
TUNG TUNG
TUNG TUNG
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NG
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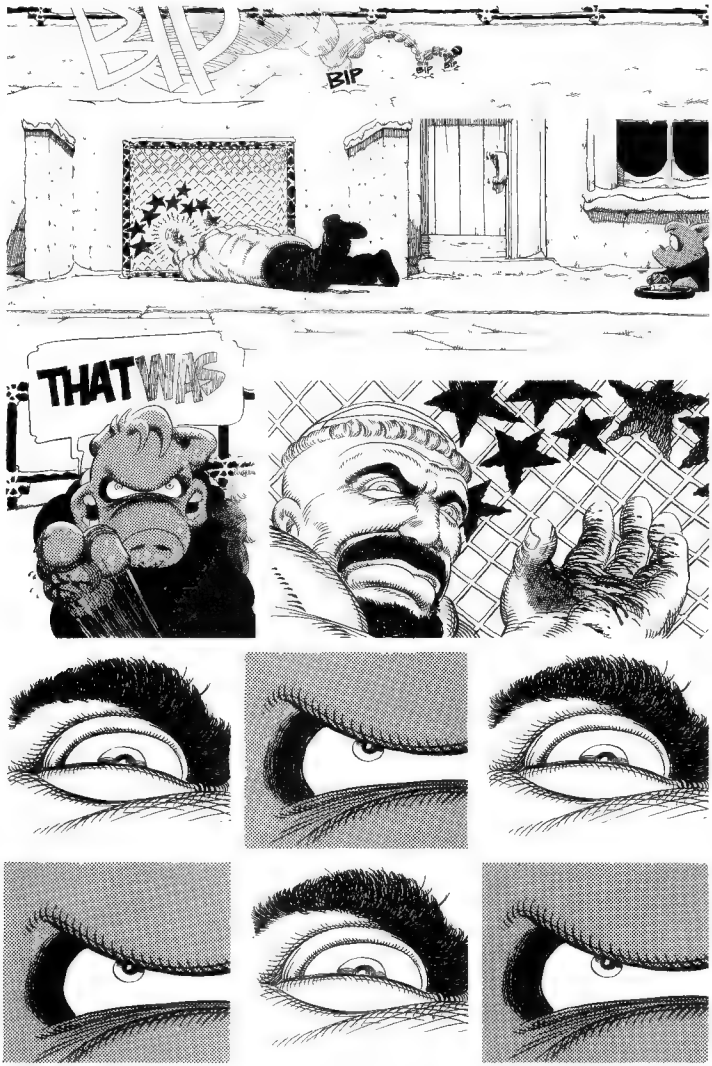
NG

TUNG
TUNG
TUNG
FLIP
WAM


BIP
BIP
THAT WAS

THAT WAS A FUCKING GREAT SAVE
AAAAAAAAA!
HA AHAHA
HNKS
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
SO, HOW'S THE HAND?
JUST FUCKIN WATTAYACALL LOOK AT IT
I WON'T BE ABLE TA WATTAYACALL WACK OFF FER A MONTH
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
YOU ST... GOT YOUR EGIT HAND!
WELL SURE BU.. IT'S A WATTAYACALL TWO-HANDED JOB!
HA HAHA HAHA

GLOOT
GLOOT
GLOOT
SIP
SWISHASWISH
PATOO
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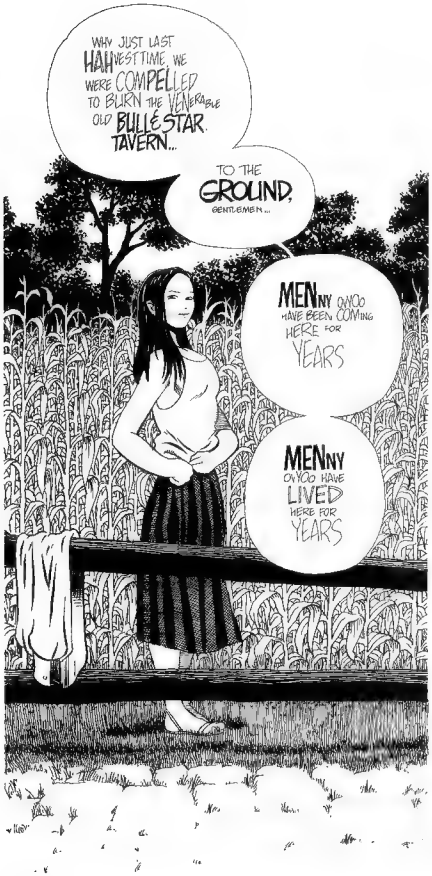
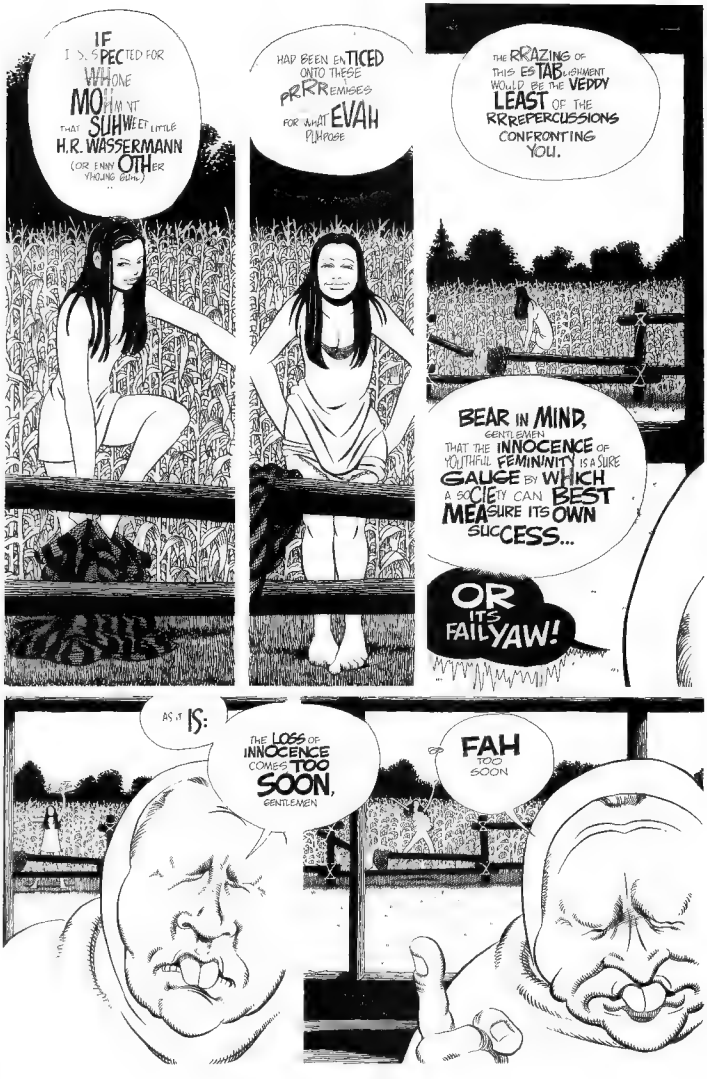
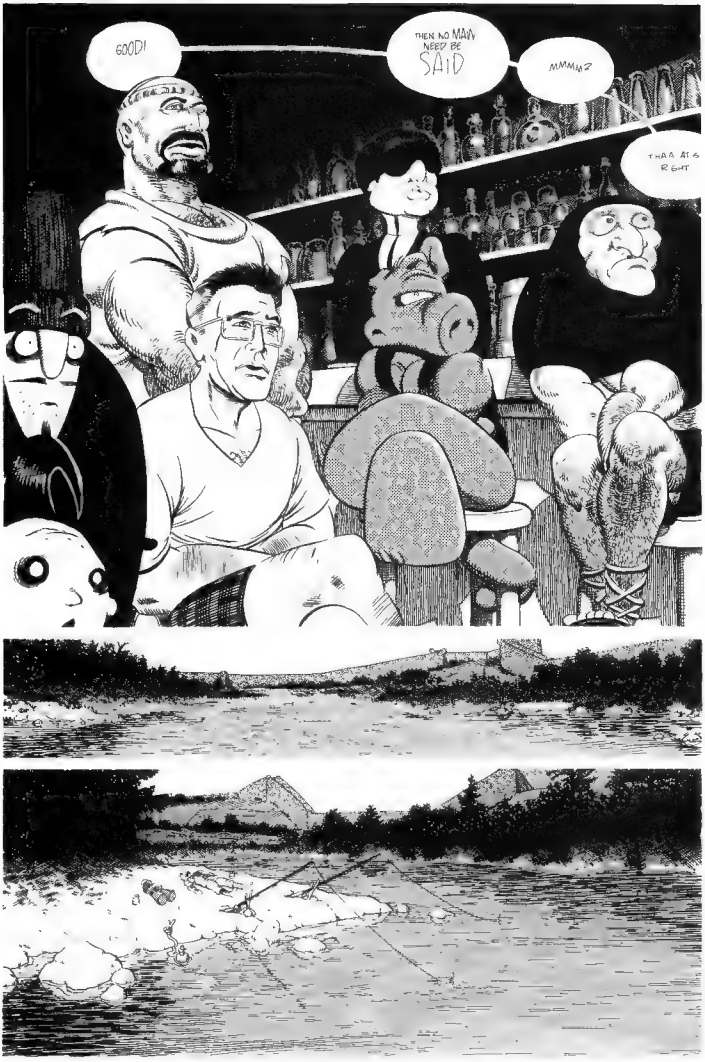
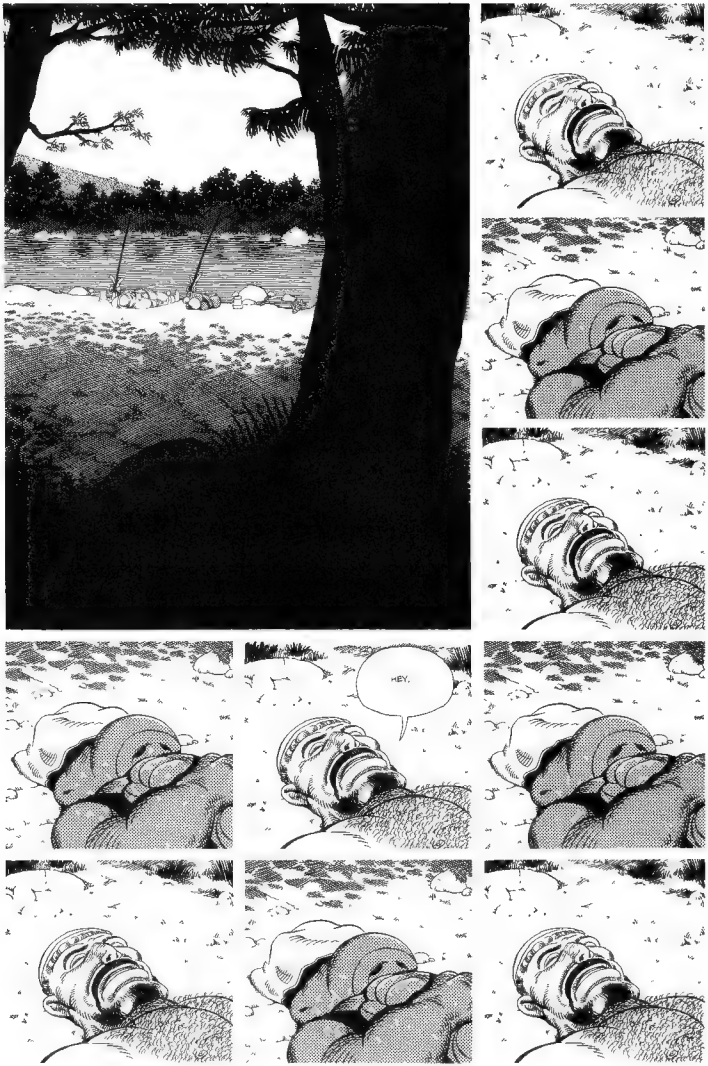
AND THE BLOODY MAHVELOUS THING IS THAT ONE GLASS LASTS ALL DAY.
'AT'S FUGGEEN GRITE, MAHTY
Y' WANNOO TIKE IT OUTS'IE VEHZ

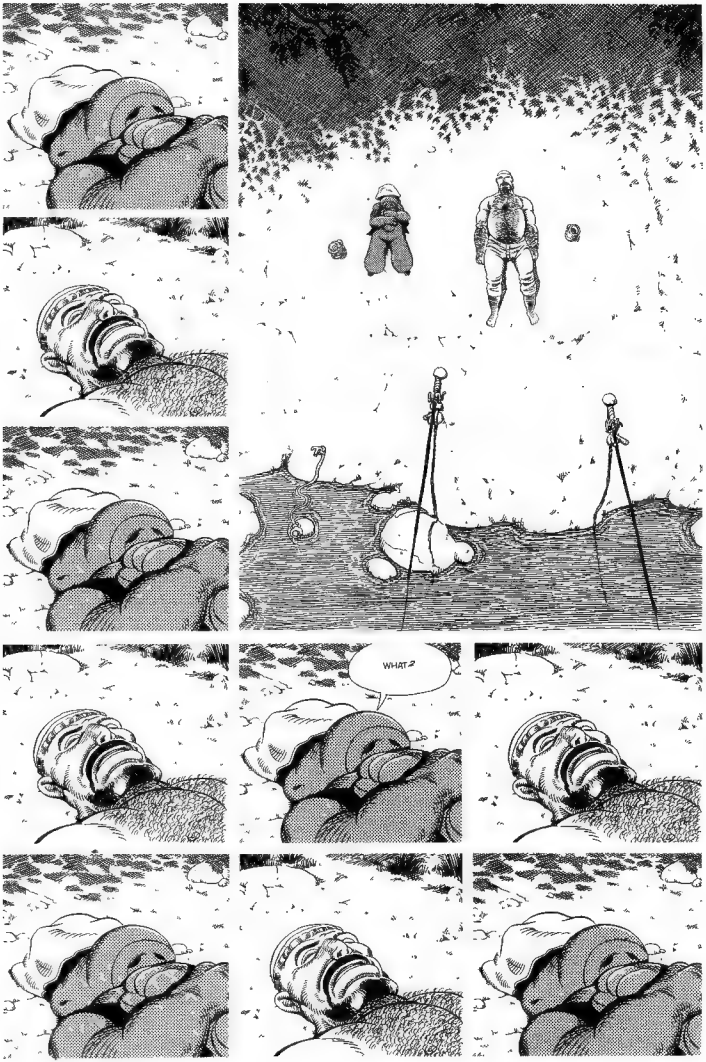

WHY JUST LAST HAHWESTTIME, WE WERE COMPELLED TO BURN THE VENERABLE OLD BULLÉSTAR TAVERN...
TO THE GROUND, GENTLEMEN...
MENNY OWOD HAVE BEEN COMING HERE FOR YEARS
MENNY OWOD HAVE LIVED HERE FOR YEARS


IF I SPECTED FOR WHONE MO'!! HMM'NT THAT SUHWEET LITTLE H.R. WASSERMANN (OR ENNY YHOUNG GUHN.) OTHER
HAD BEEN ENTICED ONTO THESE PRRREMISES FOR WHAT EVAH PURPOSE
THE RRAZING OF THIS ESTABLISHMENT WOULD BE THE VEDDY LEAST OF THE RRREPERCUSSIONS CONFRONTING YOU.
BEAR IN MIND, GENTLEMEN THAT THE INNOCENCE OF YOUTHFUL FEMININITY IS A SURE GAUGE BY WHICH A SOCIETY CAN BEST MEASURE ITS OWN SUCCESS...
OR ITS FAILYAW!
AS IT IS:
THE LOSS OF INNOCENCE COMES TOO SOON, GENTLEMEN
OR
FAH TOO SOON

THE TIME OF HER INNOCENCE IS THE MOST JOYOUS TIME IN ENNY WOMAN'S LIFE
A TIME SHE WILL TREASHAW ALL OF HER DAYS
TREASHAW...
...AND LONG FAW!
SO WE'LL HAVE NO MAW OF YAW FOOLISHNESS.
MMMMM?
THA — AAT'S RIGHT
THERE ARE MAW THAN ENOUGH MARRIAGEABLE AND MATURE WOMEN WHO WILL MAKE GOOT WIVES FAW YOU AND GOOT MUTHAS FAWYAW CHILDREN.
GENTLEMEN
I HAVE MADE MYSELF QUITE CLEAR.


GOOD!
THEN NO MAN NEED BE SAID
MMMM?
THAA AT S RGHT


HEY,


WHAT?

SPIRITS IN FLIGHT

I was aware, throughout the 1991 to 1995 period (beginning with the planning of the 1992 American Tour and ending with the Kitchener Spirits stop), that I was engaged in a finite enterprise. As anyone who has attempted to "make a difference" can tell you, the pressures are extraordinary as you move along. In retrospect, I'm not sure that the way I was trying to make a difference was altogether sensible. This was particularly true of the immediate aftermath of BONE's wildfire success when everyone and his (or her) dog was jumping into the self-publishing pool. I attempted to help as many people as I could but gradually got the overwhelming impression that I was interfering with their lives-as-stories — dragging the plot off in a direction at odds with the intention of whoever was (for want of a better term) "writing" them. It occurred to me very late in the day that it was both a good and a bad thing that so many cartoonists were so adept at lying to themselves. The bad (as is usual) was more readily apparent: for the longest time, I thought all that was required was to point out the natural pitfalls and landmines, and self-publishers would — well — stop falling in and stop blowing themselves up.

Everything was balanced very precariously, and — being by nature a pessimist — I worked very hard to keep each new self-publisher who contacted me from committing really basic, self-destructive errors. The field's — and particularly the *industry*'s — distrust and resentment of the very idea of self-publishing meant that a couple of high-profile failures could put the whole concept of self-publishing back to "square one." I had the specter of the post-Turtles wave of self-publishing — blossoming and then collapsing in the space of a few months in the mid-1980s — breathing down my neck through most of 1993-95. Coupled with the nearly infinite capacity of cartoonists for lying to themselves, "precarious" didn't half sum it up. I just knew, when someone was telling me how he had figured out what his problem was, and now — NOW — he would finally be getting back to the publishing schedule he had set for himself (or herself, as the case may be), that that person was so full of shit it was coming out his ears. Likewise the "pop culture household name wannabes" who would insist — INSIST — that their love of the comic-book medium was the cornerstone of their very existence. I just knew that if the right agent or producer or marketing whiz arched an eyebrow at them, they would be getting out the old kneepads in a Hollywood second. I gave them the benefit of the doubt every time, because I really had no other choice. The possibility existed (and, however remote, continues to exist) that they might get their shit together in the productivity department. The possibility existed (and, however remote, continues to exist) that they would (or will) see through the Hollywood bullshit and turn back at the last second. That was the bad part of cartoonists lying to themselves. The good part?

The point I had missed — through the frantic two years or so where I spent most days working on my pages while explaining the *See Jack run. Run, Jack, run*'s of self-publishing to the umpteenth caller — the point I had missed was that I had won. For almost two decades, publishers and editors, store owners and distributors had carved in stone the opinion that self-publishing — one creator /one book self-publishing — only worked for Dave Sim. For almost two decades that opinion was regarded as fact. Well, it's not a fact anymore (it never was), but more significantly it isn't even a valid opinion. There are too many self-publishers who do not lie to themselves about their productivity and who are not (really, really NOT) waiting to give some producer a Hollywood blow-job — to explain them away as aberrational or the exceptions that prove the rule.

Not that people won't do so. If *The Comics Journal*'s coverage of the 1996 ProCon is to be believed (and, hey, what more impeccable source of Truth exists, eh?), Paul Levitz tried to revive the old "it only works for Dave Sim" chestnut, while adding the pastel shading of: "it's extremely unlikely that with anybody else, major publisher, minor publisher, partner," (guess Gerhard doesn't count) ". . . could have

cared about (*Cerebus*) for that length of time and devoted that length of passion . . . " (length of passion?) ". . . to it that Dave has. It was an absolute perfect choice for him to self-publish." From this I infer that the retrenched position of the corporate self-interests is "self-publishing is a valid option for those creators whose projects extend beyond the temporal parameters of self-deception required to give we, the entrenched corporate interests, the benefit of the doubt that we are not in the process of fucking you over." In other words, don't sign with a company for a longer period of time than you feel comfortable lying to yourself about how badly you are going to be (and are being) fucked over. Six months to a year seems like a good rule of thumb here.

So, as the newer and still newer permutations of "self-publishing only works for Dave Sim and for people like him, and, really, there's only a handful, hardly worth talking about, for the most part" reassert themselves as the core of the industry's late-twentieth-century self-publishing philosophy (or lack thereof), AND given that I am not about to immerse myself in those gatherings centered on said philosophy (or lack thereof) any time soon, I hope the *Cerebus* readership will indulge me in this one, little:

"I told you so."

Thanks, guys.

anecdote

ONE DAY IN BOSTON COMMON

The second stop on the 1992 U.S. Tour took place in Boston, Massachussetts at the beginning of February. Now, when you use Boston and February in the same sentence, you would expect that the story would have something to do with a blizzard or an ice storm or some such. Not true. It was an unseasonably mild Wednesday when I landed, and it continued to grow milder over the Thursday and Friday. Like any good inhabitant of the polar regions of North America, I took advantage of this by getting out and about whenever I wasn't needed for an interview or other kind of promotional purpose (which left me, as I recall, forty-seven of the available forty-eight hours).

On one of my long walks in the area around the hotel, I found myself at Boston Common — a very attractive piece of real estate indeed. Specifically, I was at one end of Boston Common.

Having a creative imagination (for which there has yet to be devised any successful cure), I found myself deep in a mental association: Boston Common — at least the end of Boston Common where I found myself — bore an uncanny resemblance to New York City's Central Park — the Plaza Hotel end of Central Park: the same row of posh hotels and restaurants facing out onto a neatly manicured urban park /sanctuary.

My incurable creative imagination — never so grindingly intrusive as when I'm trying to do something as ordinary as going for a walk on a mild winter's day — made an intuitive leap. Given, intruded said imagination, given that we have made an internalized connection between Boston Common and Central Park; given that we are now walking west towards Central Park West (or its Bostonian equivalent); what do you suppose (it queried) we would find at the Bostonian equivalent of the corner of West 72nd and Central Park West?

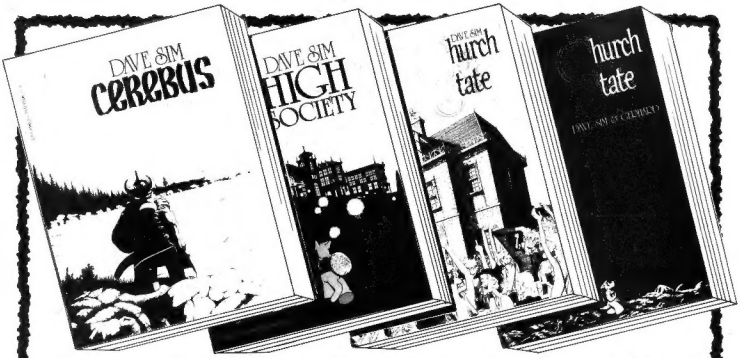
For those who might not know, the Dakota Building, home of John Lennon and whatsername, is at the corner of West 72nd and Central Park West, about four blocks down from where I found myself at the moment (at least mentally).

Since pursuing the notion in no way compromised my original intention (a walk is a walk is a walk), I decided to give it a try. So I walked the four or five blocks, struck by the extraordinary similarities between Central Park and Boston Common as I made my way.

And then, there it was: a building even more familiar to me (and most North Americans) than the Dakota itself — on the very spot the Dakota resides across from Central Park.

The Bull & Finch Tavern.

Or, as it is more popularly known: *Cheers.*



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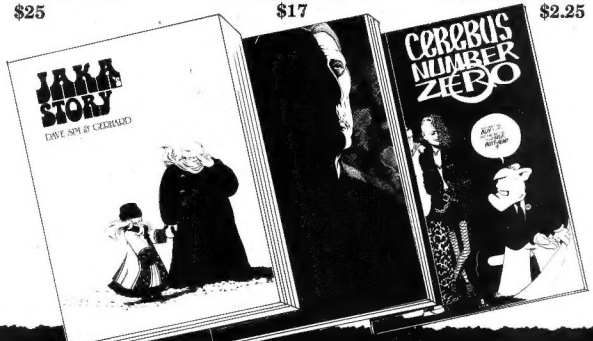

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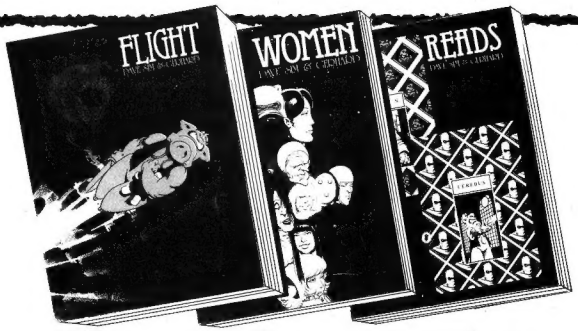

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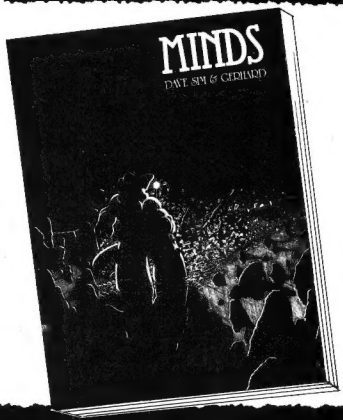

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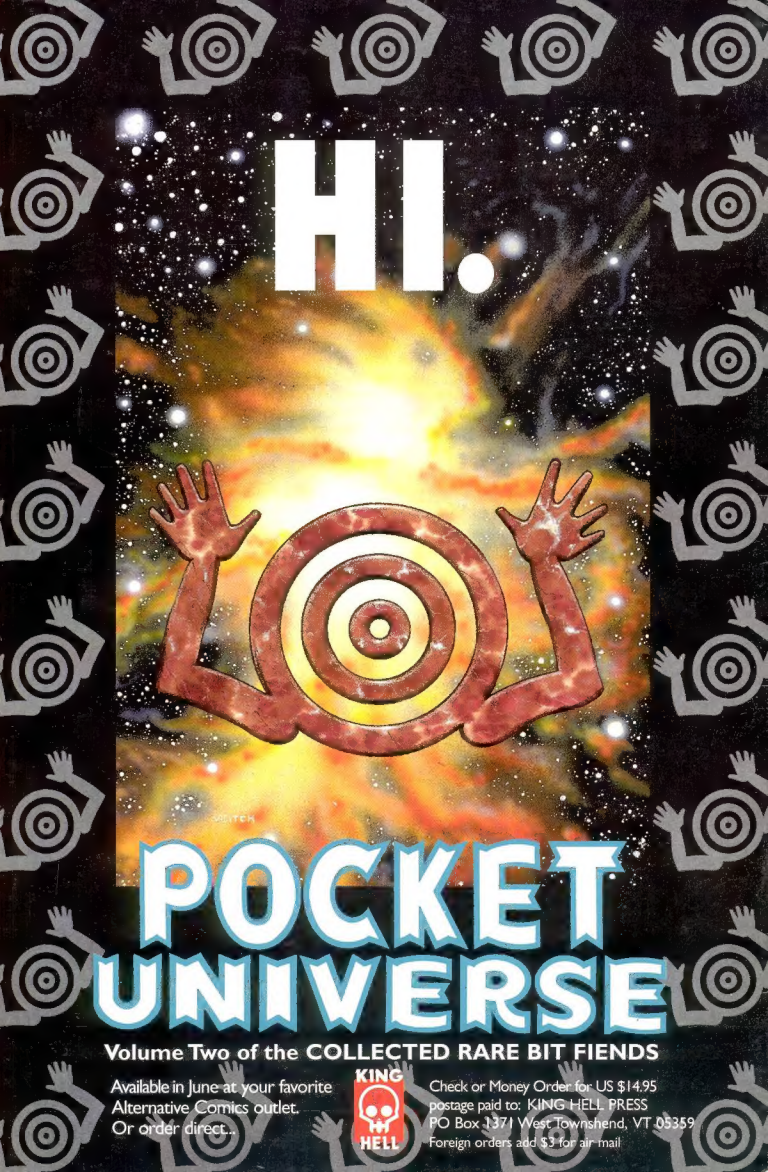
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